



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Synopses of Important Articles.

HEROD THE TETRARCH: The Rev. Principal DAVID BROWN, D.D., in *The Expositor*, October, 1892. A study of conscience.

One of the best ways of testing the authenticity of the Gospels is to select some narrative that has a number of minor incidents extending over a considerable period and connecting with outside history, then to see if the collected Gospel narratives make a consistent story. Such a test presents itself in the account of Herod the Tetrarch.

Herod is presented divorced from his wife and living in incestuous relations with Herodias. He had not lost all sense of religion. John the Baptist was at his court. John did not spare Herod, and Herod instead of resenting rebuke, "did many things"—redressed certain wrongs and heard John gladly. That Herod even endured his rebuke of his unlawful marriage, speaks much for his openness to conviction. He stood in awe of John. But Herodias gave him no rest until John was imprisoned, and then till she had accomplished, in spite of Herod's opposition, John's fall. Herod's conscience causes him to be haunted by the ghost of John. Now turn to his treatment of Jesus. Perhaps a year and a half after, he who would have saved John, desires to kill Jesus (Lk. xiii. 31). A little later Jesus is before him as a prisoner. The last spark of religious awe has now left Herod's breast, and he who had heard the servant gladly now has only contempt and scorn for the master. He had trifled with conscience and this was the result.

The consistency of this story is such as to stamp the Gospels with authenticity.

A vigorous statement, whose pictorial almost obscures its evidential value. It illustrates a striking method of reasoning on the historical truthfulness of the Gospels. This method is often carried out in the case of the person of Christ. If not pressed to the claim of an absolute and uncritical identity of view of different Gospel writers, it is valuable and impressive.

F. W.

WE SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP. Rev. SMITH B. GOODNOW, in *The Bibliotheca Sacra*, October, 1892.

In this article the writer gives an exposition of I Cor. xv. 51, and discusses the nature of the resurrection. He combats the theory of Swedenborg that the resurrection takes place at the death of each individual in an immediate translation; also a theory advanced in the "Parousia," written by Dr. Warren of the *Portland Mirror*, viz., that the word sleep here does not mean

dying, but staying in hades after death, Paul meaning, "though we shall all die yet we shall not all be in hades, but we shall be changed" to a different place, viz., to heaven.

The word sleep, however, is used repeatedly in the New Testament for death, and has that meaning here. In the resurrection there is a personal bodily change, such as was represented in the transfiguration and in the ascension of Christ. In the text two classes are contrasted,—those living who are not to require resurrection, and "the dead" who are "raised." The resurrection of the dead as seen, I Thess. iv. 17, precedes the translation of the living. That this belief expressed by Paul was that current among the disciples is seen by reference to John xxi. 22. The new theory of immediate translation of each believer demolishes the Bible doctrine of the abolishment of death. The writer deprecates the new theory as "cold and bald, quenching the enthusiasm of humanity by a shadowy idea of mere philosophical immortality of the soul" and as tending to eliminate the miraculous from the future history of the globe.

In regard to the exegesis of the passage, the writer holds to the more natural interpretation as against Meyer who would read,—we shall all—not fall asleep—but all be changed,—making the all refer to all that present generation. There is a truth in the thought of this article that is pertinent and that needs to be emphasized. The reality of the immortality of the soul is perhaps best guarded by the realism of Paul in his belief in the resurrection of the body. There are days of intensest realism, as well as of intensest idealism. Paul was a realist in his idealism. A real God in a real world, a real Christ bringing a real and present and permanent salvation to the soul,—this is the realism of Paul, and with this is associated his doctrine of the immortality of the soul through a real resurrection of a spiritual body. The realism of Paul is the very heart and soul of his aggressive missionary zeal, as it must be of all missionary zeal.

T. H. R.

ESDRAELON. By Prof. GEORGE ADAM SMITH, in *The Expositor*, November, 1892, pp. 321–342.

Breaking through the table-land of central Palestine, the broad plain of Esdraelon extends from the Jordan on the east, to the mouth of the Kishon on the west. From the north the Galilean hills and from the south the mountains of Samaria send out projecting promontories which indicate that this is but a lapse in the great backbone of Palestine. The shape of the central plain is that of a triangle; the southern base, extends from Carmel to Genin, a distance of twenty miles, while the other two sides are equal—fifteen miles each—with Mt. Tabor at the apex of the angle. From this central part, bays of plain extend in different directions, far into the country, one south of Tabor, one between Gilboa and the mountains about Genin, while the largest stretches eastward to the banks of the Jordan.

The average elevation of the plain is about two hundred feet, but eastward from Gilboa it gently sinks Jordanward to four hundred feet below the

sea level. The plain itself is one great expanse of loam, red and black, without a single tree—a great wild prairie. No water is visible even at a short distance since the chief stream, the Kishon, flows along in a deep muddy trench. Only one or two hamlets have ventured out upon the plain. Open on every side to foreign invader, Esdraelon still suffers, to-day as in the very earliest days of its history, from the inroads of the desert freebooter.

The name, "Valley of Jezreel," in the Old Testament, seems to have referred only to the valley which runs down from opposite the city of Jezreel to the Jordan, but in later times the term, changed into "Esdraelon," was extended to the entire plain. The other name, "Plain of Megiddo," was taken from the famous old fortress of Megiddo, which was probably situated at the north-east point of Carmel, commanding the pass to the plain of Sharon, the natural avenue to the south. Esdraelon is by nature the great highway of the nations. The five broad valleys leading into it from all directions rendered it accessible to the armies of all the great world powers of antiquity—Canaanite, Midianite, Philistine, Egyptian, Syrian and Assyrian, came up in succession through these passes to war with the Hebrew. Upon this plain the greatest empires, races and faiths, east and west, have contended with each other and have come to judgment.

In this, the seventh of the series of valuable papers on the geography of Palestine, Prof. Smith completes his survey of its physical contour. No one can wander over the hills and through the valleys of the land of the ancient Hebrew without feeling that the division which he makes, or rather accepts, since it is not new, is the only true one. Palestine studied in the light of its six distinct zones,—coast plains, foot hills, central plateau, Jordan valley, Gilead, and Esdraelon,—instead of appearing to be a confused complex of hills and plains, stands out bold and clear even to the student who must view it through another's eyes. Such a study alone furnishes the basis for a true appreciation of the influence of its physical contour upon the people, the history, and the very intellectual conceptions which will be forever associated with this land. These articles, while thoroughly scholarly, are at the same time clothed in such charming language, and the whole is illustrated by so many exquisite and true pen-pictures, that the reader, while ever being instructed, is never wearied.

C. F. K.

JONAH IN NINEVEH. By H. CLAY TRUMBULL, in *The Bibliotheca Sacra* for Oct., 1892, reprinted from the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. XI.

Two principal objections have been urged against the historical character of the Book of Jonah, viz: the seeming lack of sufficient reason for the miracle of Jonah's preservation in a great fish; and the improbability of the repentance of a whole heathen people at the call of an obscure prophet from a distant land.

Bible miracles, as recorded in both the Old and New Testaments, are, as a rule, not mere wonders intended to excite the astonishment of beholders, but are clearly differentiated from other reputed miracles by their natural-

ness and their consonance with the circumstances under which they were performed. The story of Jonah's deliverance, however, involves a miracle that is seemingly unnecessary and unnatural, while the instant conversion of Nineveh under the circumstances related seems even more incredible. Is there anything in modern discoveries relating to Assyrian life and history that renders the miraculous element in the Jonah story more reasonable and marvelous effect of his preaching at Nineveh more natural?

The monuments abundantly prove that the ancient Assyrians had among their divinities a fish-god, Dagan, which is represented in a variety of forms, but all containing some combination of a fish and the human figure. These representations appear on Babylonian seals and as images guarding the entrance of temples and palaces in ancient Nineveh. The name also, like that of other divinities, appears in proper names, *e. g.*, in Ishme-Dagan. According to Berosus, this fish-god appeared in early Babylonia and Chaldea from time to time and imparted to the inhabitants the first elements of civilization. He taught them the processes of agriculture, the erection of buildings, and the beginnings of letters, arts and sciences. Each time the god appeared under a different name, and each of these incarnations marked a new epoch.

Now accepting it as a fact that the Ninevites were believers in a divinity who sent messages to them from time to time by a being who arose out of the sea as part fish and part man, is it any wonder, that when they heard that the new prophet among them had come from the mouth of a great fish in the sea to bring them a divinely-sent warning, they should all be ready to heed his message and take steps to avert the threatened destruction of their city? The two main episodes in the story of Jonah are thus shown to be closely connected and are mutually explanatory.

The identification of Jonah with Oannes, the name of the Assyrian fish-god as reported by Berosus is accepted as at least plausible, but contrary to F. C. Baur and other critics who have derived the name Jonah from that of Oannes, the theory is here put forth that just the reverse is true. Supposing it to be a fact that a man named Jonah had been accepted by the Ninevites as the latest incarnation of their deity, his name might readily come to be applied to the god himself and be recorded as such by the later writer Berosus. The preservation of the name Jonah in the modern geographical term Neby Yunus, applied to a portion of the site of Nineveh, seems also to furnish a historic basis for the connection of his name with the ancient city.

The article is a very interesting and suggestive one. One naturally wishes, however, for the opinion of some competent Assyriologist upon the facts stated, before accepting its conclusions. However little credit we may give to the derivation of the name Oannes from that of Jonah, the existence of the fish-god tradition in Nineveh certainly adds much—to use Mr. Trumbull's words—“to the naturalness of the narrative of Jonah at Nineveh, whether that narrative be looked upon as a plain record of facts or as an inspired story of what might have been facts.” C. E. C.

THE BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS.—ALBERT REVILLE in the *New World* for December, 1892.

The persistent and indestructible element in Christianity is the Christian ideal. Whatever the result of independent criticism of the Scriptures, the existence and the influence of the ideal cannot be denied. Jesus of Nazareth is its initiator, and consequently its revealer. Of the four Gospels only Matthew and Luke relate anything concerning the first years of Jesus. The primitive Gospel history did not go back of the ministry of John the Baptist. Apart from two matters—the miraculous conception, and the location of the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem—these two narratives are in a state of irreconcilable contradiction. They spring from two traditions which have been developed on parallel lines without actual agreement. Their genealogies differ from each other. Neither has historic value. According to Matthew, Jesus is descended from David through the royal line of Solomon, composed of the kings of Judah down to the captivity; according to Luke, through Nathan, another son of David, much more obscure. Thus one emphasizes the royal descent; the other avoids the dishonor attaching to the descent through Bathsheba. Matthew gives twenty-six generations from David to Jesus; Luke forty-one. The first Evangelist finds his genealogy already made, but adds to it the names of four women, each in some way faulty. He does this in order to remind the Jews, who would bring reproach on Mary, that we must not trust to superficial appearances, that the ways of God are deeper than ours. There is no proof that Jesus was descended from David. Both gospels place the birth at Bethlehem, (cf. Micah v. 1). Matthew regards Bethlehem as the home of Joseph and Mary prior to this event; according to Luke their home was Nazareth. Luke explains the birth at Bethlehem by means of the census of Quirinius. But the census was limited to Judea and Samaria, and was taken in the year A.D. 6, after the deposition of Archelaus, when Judea was annexed to Syria. Nazareth was probably the native city; the story of the birth at Bethlehem, as well as of the Davidic descent, being due to the belief in his Messiahship.

The miraculous conception belongs to the dogmatic rather than to the historic order. It arose in the Judea-Christian communities, and as the mythical expression of the exalted feeling of the perfect sanctity of the Messiah. In the legend of the wise men from the East, the magi personify the adhesion of the pagan world to the king of the Jews. The persecution of Herod and the flight into Egypt are legendary. The story of the shepherds at Bethlehem illustrates the Ebionic element in these chapters. It is an effort of the poetic imagination attempting to fill up the gap in the information concerning the early days of Jesus. As to the date of Jesus' birth, this was probably one or two years before the present era. He was not born under Herod the Great, but under Herod Antipas. The incident of the child Jesus in the midst of the doctors is not improbable. The surprise manifested by Mary and Joseph is inconsistent with the announcement that had been made to them concerning Jesus.

This article contains nothing not already familiar to students of the criticism of the Gospels. It, however, presents the objection to the acceptance of the gospel narrative of the birth and infancy of Jesus in a form which will, perhaps, attract the attention of some who have not before considered them. Some of the positions of the author are well taken and important. It is certainly true that the narrative of the birth and infancy of Jesus does not belong to the first stratum of Apostolic narrative of the life of Jesus, and does not seem even to have exerted any appreciable influence on that first stratum. It is also true that the doctrine of the person of Christ presented in the Epistles is altogether independent of the supernatural birth. It is furthermore true that the accounts of the birth and infancy given by Matthew and Luke are quite distinct and independent of each other. It follows that the question of the historical value of these narratives constitutes a problem by itself which must be investigated in large part independently of the question of the historical value of the remainder of the Gospels. Historical criticism has here a legitimate and important problem, albeit not one which is fundamental to our conception of Christianity, either essential or historical. Yet it can not be said that M. Réville has given us a satisfactory discussion of the problem. It exaggerates the differences between the two narratives and the difficulties of the individual accounts. It is altogether possible that each Evangelist was ignorant of facts narrated by the other, or even had an erroneous conception in some respect of the series of events taken as a whole. But neither of these things, if actual, makes the narrative of necessity unhistorical or even inaccurate. One need not be omniscient to be truthful and trustworthy. In particular does M. Réville's denial of the birth at Bethlehem seem unjustified. The two independent narratives agree in placing the birth at Bethlehem. Surely there is nothing inherently improbable in this; nor does it seem a sufficient reason for denying it that the Jews interpreted the prophecy of Micah as predicting that the Messiah would be born at Bethlehem, especially as Luke—whose tradition Réville tells us truly was developed independently of Matthew's—makes no reference to this prophecy. But there is even less ground for denying that Jesus was of Davidic descent. For this is maintained not only in the infancy-stories but equally in the other portions of the Gospels, in Paul, in the Apocalypse, and in Acts. The reply that this is an inference from the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, is of force only when the whole gospel narrative is regarded as largely unhistorical; for just in proportion as it is insisted that the popular doctrine was that the Messiah must be the son of David, in that proportion is it certain that if Jesus had not been so descended this would have been urged as an objection to his Messiahship. But of such objection we find no trace in the New Testament record. Other points cannot in this brief note be discussed in detail. M. Réville has said all that in brief space could well be said against the historical character of the narratives of the infancy, and has constantly, it would almost seem blindly, ignored everything that could be said on the other side. The whole question is intimately connected with the question of the date of the Synoptic Gospels, and these are assigned by Réville to a date considerably later than that adopted by most critical scholars, and later than we believe the evidence will permit. One's conclusions will almost of necessity be influenced also by the degree of probability or improbability which one attributes to the supernatural as an element of the history of Jesus. We are persuaded that M. Réville has not said the final word in this matter.

E. D. B.